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PAKISTAN: SECURITY PLANNING AND THE NUCLEAR OPTION^{1/}

Summary

Pakistan's strategic planning focuses on the problem posed by India, seen as a hostile state possessing far superior human and industrial resources. In concrete terms, the planning problem is exemplified by a long border with no geographical impediments to an invading force. Pakistan cannot compensate for inferior numbers with mobility because its communication facilities are inadequately developed and too exposed to its eastern border.

With Soviet power established in Afghanistan, Pakistan now faces a virtual duplication of this border problem in the west. Moreover, its airpower, of necessity deployed out of range of the Indian border, is for this very reason correspondingly exposed on the other frontier.

To overcome its manpower deficiencies vis-a-vis India, Pakistan until recent years relied on taking the initiative in hostilities. However, the factors that made taking the offensive an acceptable risk in the past no longer prevail. Deterrence of attack, rather than initiation of war, has become the dominant theme of Pakistan's defense planners. But a satisfactory conventional force strategy is difficult to

^{1/} This report is based on a contract study prepared for the Department of State by Professor Stephen P. Cohen of the University of Illinois. Professor Cohen's study has drawn on three recent visits to Pakistan, including extensive conversations with Pakistani military officials. The full study also deals with such issues as the composition of the Pakistani officer corps, its involvement in government, and the role of Islam in the military. Copies of the full study (186 pages plus notes) may be obtained from Edward G. Griffin, INR/LAR, 632-3968. The views expressed herein are not necessarily those of the US Government.

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devise, given Pakistan's manpower situation and short supply of high-performance weapons.

To meet the needs of its present situation, Pakistan has tried to acquire high-performance conventional weapons and aircraft. Its success has been limited by financial constraints and by difficulties in establishing reliable sources of compatible arms. For manpower, the idea of resorting to a militia, or "people's guerrilla warfare," has been revived, but the military harbors serious reservations about the efficacy of such a force, and its potential negative effects on the internal viability of the military regime. Nuclear weapons are often discussed as a substitute for conventional defense forces.

Although Pakistan's military planners basically dislike nuclear weapons, they find that there are many arguments in favor of them, and that the alleged evils of possession appear either irrelevant in Pakistan's case or no worse than the country's situation without them. Writings to date by Pakistani strategists suggest that they would be inclined to use nuclear arms as strategic, or terror, weapons rather than for tactical or counter-force purposes. Some strategists find support for this preference in the Quran, but there also appear to be good pragmatic arguments for it, at least with respect to India. On balance, it does not appear that Pakistani leaders would approach decisions on such use any more irresponsibly or irrationally than would leaders of any other state.

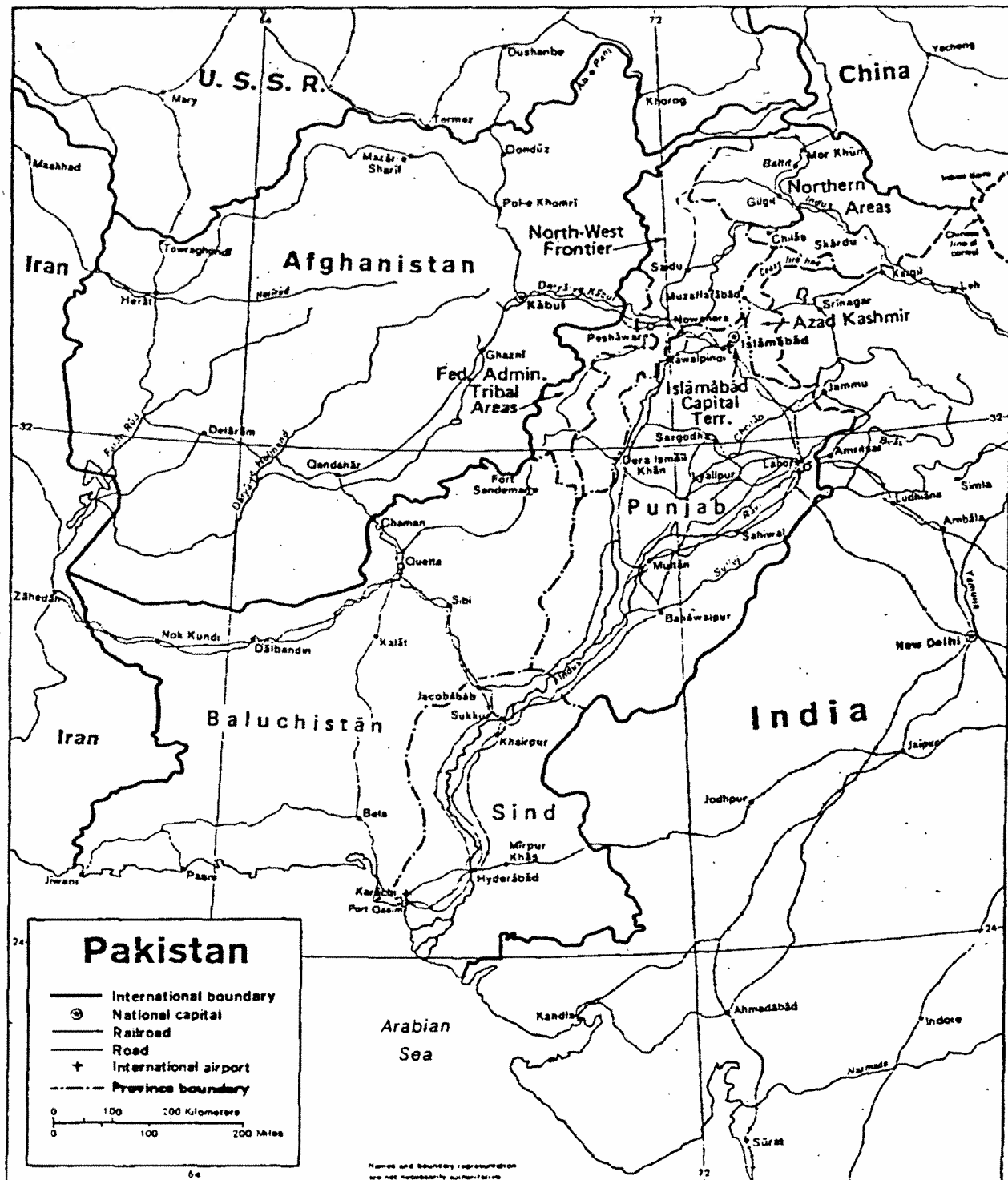
Any US effort to influence the proliferation process in South Asia must take into consideration the area's specific circumstances: the particular mix of motives for proliferation; the balancing of limited US regional interests with those of the regional states; and the probability that there will be additional detonations in South Asia in the next decade--and therefore that realistic arms control must be envisaged at a higher level of armament.

Because Pakistan's strategic style represents a consensus within the military, a major change seems unlikely so long as the military remains dominant in security decisions. Further weakening of Pakistan's tenuous conventional deterrent could lead to reliance on nuclear weapons; but a substantial role, not likely in any case, seems more conceivable if the present military regime should give way to civilian rule. A more probable change, especially under a civilian regime, would be toward a reduction in the size, role, and mission of the military. This concept has a basis in objective circumstances and does have some support, even within the military. The key to Pakistan's strategic future would appear to lie in finding a middle way between reductions in military role, which could undo the state itself, and a hardline strategic policy, which could lead its neighbors to conclude that Pakistan is hopelessly irresponsible.

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Pakistan's View of Its Position

Pakistan's perception of its place in the international environment is complex and multi-layered. The country is Islamic--it has strong but ambivalent ties to Muslims in India, as well as ties to predominately Muslim states. It straddles the historic invasion routes to South Asia--but neither its neighbors nor the superpowers agree that its position necessarily makes it geopolitically important. It seeks to play a role in regional and international affairs and has an enormous pool of trained, educated manpower--yet it is surrounded by two giant states (India and the USSR) which make Pakistanis feel insecure and threatened. Those historic "friends" of Pakistan that have resources (the US, Britain, some Arab states) are distant and unreliable; nearby friends (China, Iran) are either unreliable or preoccupied with their own security.

Pakistan was created by the conjunction of two struggles: that of Indians against British rule, and that of Indian Muslims against domination by Indian Hindus. The feeling persists in Pakistan that India has not reconciled itself to the permanent, autonomous, and Islamic status of Pakistan. Moreover, the fact that millions of Muslims seem content to live in India raises the basic question of Pakistan's identity as a homeland for persecuted Indian Muslims.

In addition to their belief in a special religious role, Pakistanis perceive themselves as having a particular historical geostrategic destiny. The young officers trained by the British came to feel an inherited responsibility to protect the Indian subcontinent from Russian-Soviet advances--a role that implies a powerful military capability. Until recently most Indian strategists vehemently disagreed with this view. They saw a strong Pakistan as disruptive; their image of regional stability envisioned Pakistan as an Afghanistan: a weak buffer. A strong buffer attracts attention, a weak one can be maintained by agreement among the concerned major powers and is not likely to go off on adventurous paths. This difference in perception of what causes instability, and of whether Pakistan should play an active or a passive buffer role, is critical; perhaps it is one of the most important agenda items in any discussion of how to deal with the Soviet presence in South Asia and how to curb nuclear proliferation.

The India Problem. In India, Pakistan faces vastly superior industrial resources and a much larger human base. While civilian'

strategists tend to treat states as abstract statistical entities, army staffs look first to geography and terrain. One senior Pakistani general, closely associated with strategic planning, sees the geomilitary problems in these terms:

"Ideally, a country is safe when it has a very large area but a very small frontier to defend; although we have a large surface area we must defend our entire border, 1,100 miles on the east...and we have a coastline of almost 500 miles to defend. Pakistan finds itself in a position that its geography forces it to defend almost every inch of its territory."

Further, the particular shape of Pakistan and the distribution of its population and lines of communication severely complicate the defense problem:

"Pakistan is narrow, that is from north to south our lines of communication, our industrial centers, our towns, our major cities lie fairly close to a country [India] that is not very friendly with us, and with which we have a border that has no geographical impediments: no major river divides us, no high range of mountains separates us from our potential enemy. It is an area where tanks can roll easily, whether it be desert or the plains of Punjab. Our other borders are not quite so vulnerable, but they can be penetrated; even our sea coast is open."

Two major wars were fought over the Punjab-Sind-Rajasthan frontier. At its northern end, a cease-fire line helps provide appropriate guerrilla territory. Parts of the cease-fire line are observed rather ineffectively by a token UN presence which serves no real peacekeeping function. Pakistan's only port, Karachi, is close to the Indian frontier. It can be attacked by land and air and blockaded very quickly by any state (such as India) with a moderate naval capability.

Pakistani planners have long had to assume that a conflict with India could develop quickly. There would not be time to raise new forces, and Pakistan's present army--while a strain on resources--is still less than half the size of India's army. Further, the length and magnitude of the border mean that a small, fast-moving force would not be able to cover it by striking in one place, defeating an Indian force, and then rapidly redeploying to strike elsewhere. Finally, it would be impossible to move large numbers of troops from north to south during a war without considerable improvement in road and rail transport and the assurance of freedom of movement. Lahore and the main north-south railway, canal, and road transportation systems are close to India and must be protected with static formations at all costs. The single port, Karachi, is 800 miles from Islamabad, and far from the likely scene of major combat in Kashmir and the Punjab.

Given Pakistan's size, location, and the terrain along its eastern border with India, its strategists have not hesitated to be the first to employ the heavy use of force to gain an initial advantage. Looking at a map, it is easy to see why Pakistanis have always been reluctant to adopt a strategy of trading space for time. In 1965 and possibly in 1971, the Pakistani leadership thought that a short, sharp war would achieve its military as well as political objectives. This strategy has always assumed the availability of high-performance armor and aircraft and superior generalship, given India's larger territory and population.

In addition, Pakistan has usually treated war as an opportunity to bring outstanding conflicts to the attention of the international community and to mobilize its friends in the Islamic world and fellow alliance members (and more recently, the Chinese). But over the years the world has grown tired of Indians and Pakistanis shooting at each other. Pakistan cannot count on anyone caring much about a new war with India; at the same time, its capacity to avoid defeat at the hands of the Indians has been sharply reduced. Initiating war for political purposes now represents an enormous risk to the survival of the state.

The Afghanistan Complication. To the west lies Afghanistan, never a friendly power and now occupied with the Soviet Union, which leads Pakistan's planners to see the problem of their long border with India virtually duplicated in the west. Until recently that western border was publicly challenged by the Afghan Government, although the legitimacy of "the Durand line" now seems to be accepted on both sides. In any case, in two of Pakistan's provinces there are important populations with strong ethnic and tribal ties across the border. Over a million tribal people have sought refuge with their kinsmen in Pakistan as a result of Soviet military activity; more will follow.

Some would say that Pakistan is helpless in the face of the Soviet threat, but this is not the view of the Pakistani military. It analyzes the threat from Afghan/Russian forces as follows:

- There is little that Pakistan could do to stop a massive invasion of its North-West Frontier Province; however, there is little incentive for the Soviets to undertake an invasion that would lead them away from the strategic prize of the Persian Gulf.
- A massive push through Baluchistan makes more strategic sense but might precipitate American intervention whether or not there was a Pakistan-US agreement.
- Far more likely, but far more containable, would be direct Soviet or (Soviet-supported) Afghan attacks on refugee camps in Pakistan. Pakistan could do some damage to the

attackers and retaliate against support facilities in Afghanistan. It could also increase the flow of weapons to the Afghans, offer training to them, and allow Pakistani "volunteers" to join them, as the Indian Government allowed Indian Army personnel to join the guerrillas in Bangladesh.

--Finally, there remains the possibility of long-haul Soviet support for Baluchi and other tribal groups in their continuing struggle against the Government of Pakistan. Such a struggle probably could be contained by the present Pakistani Government; if not, it might affect the integrity of the state, its economic base, and the loyalty of most of its citizens.

The disposition of Pakistan's forces was severely limited by geography even before the 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan; that event complicates even the simplest defense task. Of Pakistan's main-line forces, grouped into six corps, four major corps (containing most of the country's armor) face the Indian Army in the east.

The troops that patrol the western border, especially along the Afghan frontier and in Kashmir, are usually not regular army, although they are led by regular Pakistani Army officers on temporary assignment. Because the troops are raised from local tribes, their use in combat would be a serious political as well as military decision--they would have to fight their own kinsmen. Yet their presence is considerably more acceptable than that of regular Pakistani Army units which may be drawn from distant provinces. The western frontier--Baluchistan and North-West Frontier Province--does not have well-developed road or rail systems (except for the Khyber-Peshawar area). Quetta (the capital of Baluchistan) does have rail connections, but the rest of Baluchistan is both inaccessible and inhospitable. The army cannot count on moving units quickly to the Afghan border. New threats there require new units. Pakistan probably would like to raise several new divisions dedicated to defense of the Durand Line.

Before 1980 the Pakistan Air Force (PAF) was entirely oriented toward the Indian border, with most major military airfields placed well back from that border. This means that they are now very close to the Afghan frontier, and that some Soviet aircraft and missiles are less than a minute's flying time from Pakistan. If there were to be major Soviet or Afghan incursions into Pakistan--in hot pursuit of Afghan tribesmen or for purposes of harassment--the PAF airfields would be under attack. This has led the PAF to generate a minimal requirement for improved advanced warning and surface-to-air missile systems and substantial numbers of new high-performance aircraft.

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The Soviet occupation of Afghanistan forces Pakistan to play a dangerous game. Present Pakistani force levels may be adequate to deal with insurgency and limited probes by conventional Afghan forces across the border, but no forces would be adequate to deal with a major Soviet thrust backed by the threat of nuclear attack on troop concentrations or urban areas. Pakistan must maintain enough of a military presence to deal with (and thus deter) limited probes, but not so large a force that the Soviets fear Pakistani intervention on behalf of the Afghan resistance or that units facing India are depleted.

Strategic Dilemmas

Even the British never expected the Indian Army to hold out against a hypothetical invasion from the west; they only hoped it could delay the enemy until a British force arrived. The strategic choices open to Pakistan, never terribly attractive, are now increasingly risky and limited in number. The problems posed by a conflict with India become insurmountable when one considers the possibility of simultaneous pressure on the Afghan frontier. It would be suicide for the Pakistani Army to provoke a confrontation with the Indian forces today; even managing limited incursions from the Indian or Afghan frontier runs great risks of escalation. Above all, there remains the new possibility of active Indian-Soviet cooperation, based on the 1971 Treaty of Friendship, which places Pakistan in a hopeless strategic position.

When considering this defense problem from the perspective of a military staff, it is clear that something must give way. Several responses have recently been discussed publicly and privately:

- New conventional weaponry is one answer, especially high-performance aircraft and armor. Pakistan is trying to acquire or manufacture some of these itself, with limited success on both counts.
- The idea of a militia, or lightly armed defense force to defend large amounts of territory at low cost, has been revived.
- The possibility of rapprochement with one or more of Pakistan's more dangerous neighbors, even the Soviet Union, to reduce the threat of a two-front war, has been broached by some generals.
- Nuclear weapons are often mentioned as a substitute for conventional defense forces.

Another component of Pakistani strategic doctrine has been the use of military force to deter an Indian attack. In recent

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years this has become the dominant theme of Pakistan's defense planners, because they realize that the risks involved in initiating war have become greater. In the words of one major-general responsible for defense planning:

"The posture that we have decided to adopt is a policy of 'strategic defense.' You can call it a policy of deterrence or whatever, but it is our policy to maintain adequate armed forces to insure that our territorial integrity and independence are assured."

Bluntly put, some Pakistanis would hope to kill as many Indian soldiers as they can, raising the cost of an Indian attack to unacceptable levels.

Another strategic response that has been widely discussed in Pakistan may be termed a "people's guerrilla war." The concept holds that, instead of relying for deterrence and defense on expensive high-technology weapons, nuclear or conventional, Pakistan should train and arm its population to assure that any invader would be unable to occupy the country. The current military leadership of Pakistan is unlikely to favor this option. It was tried earlier in Kashmir and was not successful. The military favors regular, conventional formations, except for light patrol and police work in the tribal areas. It is also unlikely that a relatively unpopular regime will promote the widespread dispersal of small arms and explosives to its own population. Finally, Pakistanis have the terrible example of Afghanistan before them. The Afghans' proud and ancient martial tradition has merely slowed down the Soviet military machine; the price of their resistance is fearful.

Dependence on Foreign Arms

Pakistan is a large country with a substantial pool of educated, trained manpower, yet it cannot manufacture a crankshaft. It became completely dependent on the US in the 1950s for all major and most minor kinds of equipment; not until 1965, when American arms transfers were practically terminated, did Pakistanis begin to think seriously about building up an indigenous arms industry. Since 1965, there has been considerable progress in this direction, largely with Chinese and French help, but Pakistan is still dependent on foreign sources of supply for new tanks, armored personnel carriers, aircraft of all kinds, nonarmored vehicles, artillery, electronics, radar, fire control systems, and many other items.

Except for the Chinese, who have earned a reputation among the Pakistanis for steadfastness, reliability, and tact--if not for the quality of their technology--the fact is that Pakistan no longer has "friends" who are reliable suppliers of key weapons, whether for cash, credit, or as a grant. The French

will sell Mirage and other weapons, but only for cash--which means Pakistani reliance on states that will provide it. Since 1967 the US has had an extremely restrictive policy on arms transfers to South Asia--virtually identical to that adopted as a global arms transfer policy in 1977. The Soviet Union has provided a limited number of T-55 tanks to Pakistan, but has demanded settlement of the Kashmir issue as the price of further assistance. In almost all other cases there are special obstacles; indeed, few other states make the kinds of weapons that Pakistanis feel they must have.

Pakistan has acquired a small number of weapons from a large number of states, but on an irregular basis. This presents serious problems of compatibility. For example, artillery comes from the US, China, Great Britain, Italy, and North Korea, which raises difficulties of coordination, ammunition supply, and training (although Pakistani gunners claim that because of their weapons diversity their personnel are among the most flexible and innovative in the world).

Two factors stand in the way of Pakistan's attempts to acquire high-performance aircraft and substantial amounts of armor and other weapons. One, alluded to above, is cost. By any standards, Pakistan is not a rich country, and its economy has been in serious trouble since the 1971 war with India. But another restriction on arms transfers is of equal importance. The Indian Government has long been obsessed with preventing the transfer of any weapons to Pakistan--only the recent Soviet invasion has caused it to reconsider. Few Western and even few Islamic states want to alienate the larger and more powerful India for the sake of an arms sale to Pakistan. Only China (for obvious reasons) and France (which sees Pakistan as an entry route into the Islamic world, and in any case sells little to India) have recently provided major weapons to Pakistan.

The Nuclear Option

There is evidence to indicate that Pakistan took nuclear weapons seriously long before the 1974 Indian explosion. In any case, the military apparently continued the nuclear program after it removed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto from power in 1977. Pakistanis now argue that a modest, "limited" weapons program is essential to deter India's nuclear forces. They assume Indian possession of several nuclear weapons and feel that such weapons are directed primarily against Pakistan, not China. Pakistani strategists generally ridicule the idea that India will catch up with the Chinese or that there are serious grounds for an India-China conflict. Rather, they see an Indian bomb as enabling Indian conventional forces to seize the rest of Kashmir from Pakistan or even to dismember all of Pakistan;

nuclear weapons held in reserve as a threat against Lahore, Karachi, Islamabad, and other vital targets would effectively paralyze Pakistan and make it unable to resist.

The Pakistani military does not like nuclear weapons--no soldier really likes them. A few active and retired generals have spoken and written in opposition to a Pakistani nuclear program; most have come to accept the idea of a nuclear weapon but with varying degrees of enthusiasm. Pakistan did not rush into a nuclear program without consideration of the relevance of such weapons to the security environment of the state. Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto had long been an advocate of a Pakistani nuclear option (that is, a civilian program that could be converted to military uses), but it was not until 1974 that the military seriously addressed itself to the strategic implications of an Indian--and then a Pakistani--nuclear weapon. Its analysis had two major points.

First, nuclear weapons are most effective in deterring other nuclear weapons, but the only time that nuclear weapons have been used was when the enemy did not have them; thus, Pakistan was terribly vulnerable to what was assumed to be an Indian military nuclear program. Second, the mutual possession of nuclear weapons not only is an effective deterrent at the nuclear level, but also has led to the avoidance of direct war between states that possessed nuclear weapons. While it is true that the widespread proliferation of nuclear weapons was not necessarily in Pakistan's interests, it did not threaten those interests, because the states most likely to confront Pakistan already either had nuclear weapons or were capable of acquiring them.

Nor did the behavior of Pakistan's allies do much to challenge the obvious implications of this analysis: China had long refused to transfer nuclear technology and subscribed to a doctrine of self-reliance in nuclear matters; the US Government at first seemed to ignore the Indian explosion but then turned its fury upon both India and Pakistan for failing to sign the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). It was in any case unwilling to provide conventional weapons to Pakistan in sufficient number to balance an Indian nuclear capacity; there is some doubt whether any quantity of arms can, for most Pakistanis, balance a nuclear weapon in Indian hands.

The Pakistanis apparently reached the same conclusion that most other states would reach if faced with a growing conventional military imbalance, domestic disorder, and shaky allies. A small nuclear program would enable them to do in nuclear terms what their armored divisions and air force can no longer do in conventional terms: punish an Indian attack so severely that it will be deterred to begin with. And the bonus is that such deterrence would work against a massive conventional attack as well.

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Possession of the bomb by India and Pakistan will entangle both in an endless series of calculations of "If I do this, he will do that, and I will have to respond, so why don't I move first?" But in the present state of bilateral nuclear options the same calculations are necessarily carried out, and this has served to increase the pressure within the two governments to go ahead with military nuclear programs as insurance against the other side. The fact that a Pakistani nuclear weapon would likely lead to an Indian one is not in itself a sufficient barrier for Pakistani strategists; they do not think unlimited proliferation would be more disadvantageous than the present situation (in which they assume that India already has a covert nuclear capacity). To sum up, there are enormously persuasive strategic reasons for Pakistan to go ahead with a military nuclear program, even if the political, diplomatic, and economic cost is substantial.

There has been some interesting discussion in Pakistan recently on the strategic role of nuclear weapons. As in the case of India, Pakistani nuclear planners could choose to use their nuclear forces for tactical or strategic ends. That is, they could be used against massed troop concentrations or they could be dropped on urban populations as sheer terror weapons. Such writing as does exist on the subject would seem to indicate that Pakistani strategists favor the most dramatic (but realistically the most conservative) use of nuclear weapons. Nuclear weapons are "terror" weapons par excellence, and Pakistani strategists find support for this emphasis in the Quran.^{2/} There is no need to use them; mere possession is enough to frighten off the threat. Such strategy would simplify Pakistan's command and control problem and would require the minimum number of weapons. It would also simplify targeting and delivery requirements, because accuracy and timing are not crucial.

All of this is grim but the mere fact that Pakistanis engage in such calculations does not make them irresponsible. It is the melancholy duty of the professional soldier to think about such things. Nor is there much substance in the charge that Pakistan would irresponsibly detonate nuclear weapons or transfer them to other areas of the world. Pakistan's military has done self-destructive things in the past, and one cannot assume that it will not do them in the future. But the Pakistani Army has done much to regain its professional character; it is not likely to make such decisions any more irresponsibly than any other state confronted with the same perplexing set of security constraints.

The reasoning that applies to a hypothetical Indian attack upon Pakistan may be relevant to a hypothetical Soviet attack

^{2/} See INR Report No. 65-AR, "Islam and the Pakistani Officer Corps," February 5, 1981.

from Afghanistan. Although Pakistan would be no match for an all-out attack, nuclear weapons might contribute something to its deterrent force. But there is a rub. If Pakistan were in such dire straits that it actually contemplated the use of a nuclear weapon against an attacking enemy, it might have already lost the military edge that would make credible its delivery of such weapons on enemy targets. Pakistan might well find its nuclear force both provocative and ineffective.

Non-Proliferation and American Policy

Any state that wishes to influence the proliferation process in South Asia must understand that this is a complex affair. At certain force levels--should the region become nuclearized--relations between South Asian states and between the region and external powers may become more rather than less stable. States seek nuclear weapons for a variety of reasons: the pressures of technology, the presence of an arms race, the weapons' relevance to a search for status and symbolic gratification, and their utility as instruments of policy and strategic discourse.

Influence does not mean dominance. The US cannot--nor should it--become the "controller" of the arms race in South Asia. America's role in South Asia has always been marginal to its own vital interests, but this marginal role has had enormous consequences for regional states. The US must learn to coordinate its own limited regional interests with the common interests of regional states. This means neither attempting to impose its views nor allowing regional states a veto of its policy; several administrations have been unable to avoid either excess.

It may not be possible to base anti-proliferation policy on keeping arms at their present levels. There are likely to be additional detonations in South Asia during this decade. (This may be partly because the US will not choose to expend the resources necessary to dissuade India and Pakistan from converting their nuclear programs to military use.) But it may be possible to limit explosions to tests, or limit the buildup of stockpiles to that done covertly rather than overtly, and to develop regional arms control relationships which may ensure some degree of stability as proliferation takes place.

Aristotle cautioned his students against pursuing the "best" state rather than the "best possible" state. The best strategy for dealing with nuclear proliferation is of questionable value if it triggers a conventional war. And ironically, the strategy developed by recent US administrations for dealing with proliferation may also have served to increase rather than decrease the rate of proliferation.

By contrast, a "best possible" strategy would have to identify the minimum security requirements of both India and

Pakistan and to treat the nuclear issue as part of their security calculations, not try to eradicate it. Such a strategy should attempt to assist regional states--Pakistan, India, China--to reconcile their major disputes at the negotiating table rather than on the battlefield. The states involved then could move toward their own version of an MBFR agreement. Pakistani arms could be left at a level adequate to deter the unlikely straight-on Soviet or Indian attack but not so large that it would enable Pakistan successfully to attack India. There is an upper limit of arms beyond which Pakistan need not cross, for to do so would be threatening to India; but there is an important lower limit. Below this mix of numbers, quality, and tactical disposition Pakistan cannot fall.

India and Pakistan must jointly determine these upper and lower limits; the US role in such an effort should be to help fill in gaps and deficiencies so as to strengthen the security of both states. Pakistanis may have to reconcile themselves to second-rank regional status, but Indians expect Pakistan effectively to disarm and assume the status of a Sri Lanka or a Bangladesh.

A regional settlement leading to a balanced imbalance of conventional arms must necessarily include the nuclear problem. It may be that the states most directly involved are willing to live with neighbors that can quickly cross the nuclear threshold; if this did not imply proliferation to other regions there is no reason why the US and other powers could not endorse such an agreement--and strengthen it with material inducements, including jointly controlled energy-generating nuclear facilities.

The Future of Pakistan's Strategic Planning

Pakistan is the only ex-colonial state to have been divided by war. The successors to the military regime that governed at the time of that division are aware that neither the international nor the domestic environment has improved since 1971. Pakistan is flanked by the Soviet Union and India; over a million Afghan refugees have crossed the border, with more on the way; Pakistan's international friends do not match their verbal encouragement with material support; in terms of equipment, the military is in relatively poorer shape now than it was in 1971; politically, it is even more unpopular, and there appears to be no civilian leadership capable of assuming power. Ethnic, regional, religious, economic, professional, and class groups periodically express their unhappiness with continued military rule. That rule is widely perceived as incompetent, and some in the military feel that it may be damaging to the army itself. Many Pakistanis and foreigners do not believe that Pakistan will survive in its present form beyond this decade. Pakistan faces the unenviable prospect of becoming a latter-day Poland, partitioned out of existence.

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Without underestimating the possibility that civil war, revolution, external invasion, or some other calamity may lead to another division of Pakistan, there are factors that may enable Pakistan to surmount its present crisis. First, although unpopular, the military leadership is rational and is aware of the desperate predicament it is in. Zia and other generals have encouraged debate and criticism within the military, although they have not allowed civilians to speak their mind. They are painfully aware of the technical shortcomings of the military, of the regional dominance of India, of the ruthlessness of the Russians, and of the perceived unreliability of their American ex-ally. Nor do they think that the Islamic world, let alone the nonaligned movement, will do much to help them. They hold the stark but realistic view that they must rely on their own resources and forge their own path at a moment of great peril. But this path is not immediately apparent to anyone--Pakistani or non-Pakistani.

The present strategic style represents a consensus within the military hierarchy, so it is not likely that there will soon be a change in Pakistan's attempts to maintain a conventional retaliatory capacity (in the form of armor, air support, and mobile infantry) to punish or raise the price of invasion. In view of the difficulties cited above, the credibility of Pakistan's conventional deterrent is steadily declining. Yet nuclear weapons are hardly attractive to the professional Pakistani officer; pressure for their acquisition probably came first from civilians. Pakistan will acquire nuclear weapons if it can, but it is not probable that they will be used as a substitute for conventional ground and air force as long as the military remains in power or retains a veto over security policy.

Should the Pakistani Army be persuaded to withdraw from power and its dominant role in defense policymaking, it is conceivable though unlikely that a future civilian government, following in Bhutto's footsteps, might pursue an expanded role for nuclear weapons or attempt to create a people's army. But it is improbable that the Pakistani Army as it is now constituted would yield power to those who would gut them. Pakistan would have to be on the verge of civil war and anarchy for such a radical departure to be contemplated.

More likely would be a civilian attempt to limit the size, role, and mission of the military without altering its characteristic structure. There are a number of thoughtful officers who have argued that Pakistan could survive with a much smaller military establishment, even without nuclear weapons, and that regional stability and even Indian dominance do not mean the destruction of an independent Pakistan. Some actually have argued for a "deal" with the Soviet Union. The dangers here lie not in the present but in the future. Would a Pakistan subservient to either India or the Soviet Union be

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required to alter its Islamic character? Would strategic dependency lead to political and cultural penetration, undoing the partition of 1947?

Finally, there is the small but (in view of 1971) not incredible possibility that one of Pakistan's neighbors will seize upon its disorder and end the "Pakistan problem" once and for all. If the Pakistani Army were defeated and disarmed, Pakistan could be divided into its "natural" components, each a separate, independent state, each virtually disarmed and under the protective influence of India or the Soviet Union. It is inconceivable that India would want to reabsorb much of the present Pakistan, but it might conclude that an unstable, fragile, nuclear-armed, and hostile Pakistan held greater risks than an immediate war.

Thus, Pakistan must search for a middle path between concessions that would undo the state itself and a hardline strategic policy that threatens total war as a form of defense--and in doing so leads Pakistan's neighbors to conclude that it is unredeemably irresponsible. This is especially true in India's case. Pakistan has little choice except to learn to live with its newly powerful neighbor and to accept its own de facto strategic inferiority.

Such acceptance in turn is dependent on Indian statesmanship. If India insists that Pakistan has no legitimate defense needs, then Pakistan is in an impossible position. But if India recognizes that it has an interest in the continuing existence of a Pakistan capable of defending itself--because that capability is one of the necessary conditions for the integrity of the state, then there may be an opportunity for a general regional security agreement. The terms of such an agreement can be worked out only by the states involved. Additional incentives to reach it, as well as material support to strengthen it, can and should come from others.

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